

# AS NATIONS RAGE

By

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When Jesus calmed the raging storm with only a word, he chided the apostles for not having faith. He expected them to believe that He had power over the elements, over life and death and over all things.

Even after witnessing miracle after miracle, the disciples still found it hard, if not impossible, to believe fully what Jesus was telling them; that they need not ever worry or be anxious because He was with them and all power was His. Their doubts increased when he failed to use His power to conquer His enemies and to preserve His own life.

His claim to power did not seem to be supported by the circumstances. Such is the case today. Man's condition presents an ugly picture of poverty, war, graft and corruption in government and an increasing animosity to the truth of God. Individual believers are confronted with staggering burdens including disease, persecution and heart-breaking circumstances in family relationships.

The question that creeps in during the dark hours of suffering is: If Christ has all power, why doesn't He do something about this? The fact that He seems to do nothing about it leaves many with grave doubts as to His power.

Did Jesus have the power He encouraged the apostles to think He had? He appeared powerless on the day He died, but His power was affirmed when he rose from the grave, and from that day the apostles never doubted His statement: "All power has been given unto me in heaven and on earth" (Matt. 28:18).

The first effort to preach the gospel led to the apostles' arrest. When they were released they met with the other Christians and reminded them of the second Psalm;

"Why do the nations rage,  
And the peoples imagine vain things?  
The kings of the earth set themselves in array,  
And the ruler were gathered against his anointed saying,  
Let us break their bonds asunder" (Psa. 2: 25-26)

Clearly the apostles attributed their suffering, not to Christ's lack of power, but to the fact that His power resulted in conflict.

The raging of the nations began as soon as Jesus appeared. Herod the Great tried to get Him with the slaughter of the children. The Jews tried to kill him time and time again, finally succeeding with the crucifixion, at which they probably thought they had broken God's plan and purpose, only to learn that He had risen, and that His purpose was being presented to the world through the disciples.

After His ascension to the throne of rule, the effort began to unseat him, resulting in the martyrdom of thousands of Christians. The conflict in the world today is due to the effort of man to thwart the purpose of God, to "break His bonds," which means to destroy the Laws by which God holds civilization together.

Leaders rage against God as Creator. They would destroy the laws of science by twisting them to accommodate evolution. This is especially true of the federal government which, as Dr. Henry Morris points out, "in its prestigious national museums,

especially its Smithsonian Museum of Natural History, it openly seeks to indoctrinate its swarms of visitors (estimated at 17 million annually) in the religion of evolutionary humanism, naturalism, and materialism.” In all these exhibits, Dr. Morris states, “it is impossible to find one single evidence of real evolution.”

The nations rage against the order of marriage, against all the laws controlling sexuality, which are God-given for the right regulation of life, of family, of children and of nation.

The humanist educators furiously attack those who cling to the moral doctrines of the Bible, which is another way of raging against the Christ who gives us those doctrines.

Government efforts to destroy private property rights through a multitude of bureaucratic regulations and through confiscatory taxes is raging against the Sovereign, who gives man the power to get wealth and holds him responsible to use it for the glory of God.

Who can tell how much poverty and how many wars are the result of the effort of the socialists to bring “equality” to all men (except those in power) and thus eliminate any distinction between those who give allegiance to the Lord and those who deny Him? This is another form of raging against the Anointed.

Immorality, pornography, drug abuse, all are products of the incessant struggle of man to break the bonds of God, to destroy His laws and get out from under His rule.

But all man can do is rage! He cannot remove the rule, nor unseat the Ruler. He can violate the laws, but they remain in force, and man is broken upon them.

The apostles did not question Christ’s power when he did not keep them from persecution. It was proof of His reign, that wicked men should resist Him and His servants. Instead of doubting His power, they prayed “and now, Lord, look upon their threatening and grant unto thy servants to speak the word with all boldness” (Acts 4:29).

What do we learn?

First, that Christ’s power is not diminished by the increase of rebellion against Him. Christ did not use His power to escape temptation or suffering, nor even death. Therefore we should not expect Him to use His power to keep us from having to face problems which arise from the raging of the enemies. Suffering is a means of perfecting His people, and bringing us to himself. “Though He was a Son yet learned obedience by the things which He suffered, and having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey Him the author of eternal salvation” (Heb. 5:8). Should we seek any shorter way of learning obedience and becoming complete as servants?

Second, there is a cosmic conflict and Christ is in the center of it. It is because He is Lord — because He is perfect, Holy and absolutely good — that all the evil of the world rages against Him. We who by grace are counted worthy to be on His side ought to welcome the privilege of engaging in the conflict. It is to the everlasting shame (and perhaps the ultimate perdition) of a great portion of the church today that the members seek only pleasure, self-gratification, the good-feeling of religion and the life of least resistance, instead of getting on the firing line and seeking with all the heart the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, then holding forth His truth against all the hosts of the sophisticated and celebrated people of the world who join together and take counsel to dethrone Him.

We are to pray for boldness to speak for Christ with faith in His power to accomplish His purpose.

Third, to become a Christian is to submit to Christ with faith in His power to accomplish His purpose.

Does He say to lose your life for His sake? It's all right. He has power to give it back, with interest.

Does He insist that you sacrifice the world's esteem and honor and humble yourself? Go ahead. He has power to exalt you!

The less you cling to human power the greater His power "works in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure."

Fourth, Christ's patience with His enemies is no sign of weakness but rather a demonstration of His power. The person with total power does not react with alarm at every hand raised against him. He can well afford to let the vicious blows fall, knowing they can do him no harm. The longer he can wait patiently before finally destroying the insolent rebel, the greater his power and self-control.

There is a day coming. Christ repeatedly told the disciples that He would be slain and would be in the tomb three days before breaking the bonds of death in resurrection.

The conquest of death was not immediate. Nevertheless it could not be postponed nor delayed beyond the time He had set. In the same way He has appointed a day of judgment (Acts 17:31). The judgment is not delayed nor postponed. When the day arrives all those who have raged against Him will feel His power and suffer the destruction which they so loudly seek to disprove.

In the meantime, there is no place for anxiety among His people. We are to labor, to strive to stay on the narrow road we entered through the strait gate, and to fight the good warfare of faith. We are to count it joy when we suffer trials, for they temper our faith. We are to pray for our enemies, bless our persecutors, return good for evil — knowing the judgment evil-doers must face — to go about our business for the Lord, knowing that all power is His.

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